DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 418 375 CS 013 144

AUTHOR	Raine, LaVerne; Harkins, Donna; Sampson, Mary Beth
TITLE	Rationale in Choosing a Teacher Preparation Program.
PUB DATE	1997-12-04
NOTE	20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference (47th, Scottsdale, AZ, December 3-6, 1997).
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Comparative Analysis; *Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; Professional Development; *Student Attitudes; *Student Teaching
IDENTIFIERS	Teaching Research

ABSTRACT

A study examined students' reasons for, and implications of, choosing a traditional student teaching program or a field-based program of preservice teacher education. The traditional student teaching program and the field-based program were offered concurrently for a short period of time at Texas A&M University--Commerce. Students enrolled in both programs responded to a four-part questionnaire at the conclusion of the experience. A total of 81 students in the traditional program and 28 students in the field-based program responded. Results indicated that (1) traditional students' choices were consistently driven by three factors: time, money, and location; (2) the majority of field-based students based their choice on the belief that the longer time period in the public school classroom would result in enhanced preparation for a career in the teaching profession; (3) field-based students "defended" their choice by focusing on the extensive experience, better preparation, increased confidence, and preparation in content area; (4) the majority of field-based graduates stated they would recommend the field-based program; (5) the traditional graduates based their defense on the concept that the traditional program was the "best choice"; and (6) only 42% of the traditional graduates would advise a friend to pursue the traditional program and 38% of the traditional students said their advice would depend on circumstances. (Contains 10 references and eight pie charts. The questionnaire is attached.) (RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

RATIONALE IN CHOOSING A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

Round Table Session/National Reading Conference
December 4, 1997: Scottsdale, Arizona

Presenters: LaVerne Raine, Department of Elementary Education, Texas A&M University, Commerce, TX 75429
Donna Harkins, Greenville ISD, Greenville, TX 75401
Mary Beth Sampson, Department of Elementary Education, Texas A&M University, Commerce, TX 75429

ED 418 375

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this round table is to examine and discuss students' reasons for and implications of choosing a traditional student teaching program or a field-based program of preservice teacher education. Researchers will share data on students' decision making processes as well as students' reflections after completing either a traditional or field-based program of preservice teacher education. University faculty will also discuss their observations of the collaboration process between the university and public schools and insights regarding elementary education field experiences.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Goodlad (1991, 1994) raised the issue of the need for the redesign of pre-service teacher education. Since student teaching has been recognized as possibly the most influential aspect of preservice teacher education (Britzman, 1991), it is crucial that teacher education schools provide meaningful and practical experiences for preservice teachers.

The establishment of professional development schools incorporating field-based education has been identified as a means to enhance teacher preparation (Holmes Group, 1986, Lieberman & Miller, 1986, McCarthy & Peterson, 1989, Murphy, 1990). The benefits of this more holistic approach to preservice teacher education have been explored (Arenz & Appel, 1994). While comparisons between traditional student teaching programs and field-based programs indicate that both students and mentor teachers believe that a more holistic approach may be more beneficial, the rationale for students' choices of programs has had minimal exploration.

PROBLEM

Therefore, the objectives of this study were to: (a) examine students' primary reasons for choosing a traditional teacher training program or a field-based program, (b) examine students' secondary reasons for choosing a traditional teaching training program or a field-based program, (c) examine the students' reflections concerning their choices, and (d) determine if the students would advise others to pursue a like choice.

METHOD

The traditional student teaching program and the field-based program were offered concurrently for a short period of time at Texas A & M University - Commerce. Students enrolled in both programs responded to a four part questionnaire at the conclusion of the experience. The questionnaire was designed to explore students' primary reasons for choosing a traditional teacher training program or a field-based program. Students were asked to respond to questions concerning the decision making process as it related to program selection. In addition, students were asked to reflect on the wisdom of their choice of program.

The researchers sought explanations for why students made the decisions they made in choosing a preparation program for the teaching profession and the rationale for their choice. Eighty-one students in the traditional program responded to the questionnaire; twenty-eight students who chose the field-based program responded.

Responses from students in the traditional program and the field-based program were analyzed separately. Two researchers examined the data and generated the categories by analyzing the language the subjects employed in their responses (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). On a second reading, responses were tallied using a frequency count. At least 90% agreement was sought on interrater reliability.

CS013144

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
L. Raine
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RESULTS

As demonstrated by the attached pie graphs, the analysis determined differences in students' rationale for choice and defense of the choice. The traditional students' choices were consistently driven by three factors: time, money and location. In contrast, the majority of the field-based students (91%) based their choice on the belief that the longer time period in the public school classroom would result in enhanced preparation for a career in the teaching profession. The belief that the field-based preparation would result in enhanced preparation was echoed when students were asked what advice they would give to a friend regarding the choice of programs. It was expected that graduates would defend their choice of programs and advise friends to pursue the same path. Field-based students "defended" their choice by focusing on the extensive experience (35%), better preparation (25%), increased confidence (14%), preparation in content area (3%) and the relationship which they developed with mentors (3%). The majority of field-based graduates (78%) stated they would recommend field-based with 4% noting that their advice would depend on pre-service teacher's circumstances. In contrast, the traditional graduates based their defense on the concept that the traditional program was the "best choice" (34%), time (23%) , money (9%) and family (9%). Only 42% of the traditional graduates stated they would advise a friend to pursue the traditional program and 38% of the traditional students said their advice would depend on circumstances.

CONCLUSIONS

Students who chose the field-based program were willing to exchange known factors of the traditional program for the chance to have more hands-on experience in the classroom. For students who chose the traditional student teaching program, time and money were major considerations. Students in the field-based program were willing to set aside time and money factors for the opportunity to work more directly in the classroom for a longer period of time. The development of skills appeared to be a major determinant for students who chose the field-based program; whereas, traditional students' primarily saw the student teaching experience as a means to an end.

REFERENCES

Arenz, B.W. & Appel, M.E. (1994). A pre-student teaching field-based semester. ERIC Document, Clearinghouse no. SP035579.

Britzman, D.P. (1991). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Dixon, P.N. & Ishler, R.E. (1992). Professional development schools: Stages in collaboration. *Journal of teacher education*, 43, 28-34.

Goodlad, J.I. (1991). Why we need a complete redesign of teacher education.*Educational leadership*, 48(4), 4-10.

Goodlad, J.I. (1994). *Educational renewal: Better teachers, better schools.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Holmes Group. (1986). *Tomorrow's teachers.* East Lansing, MI: Author.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1986). School improvement: Themes and variations. In A. Lieberman (Ed.), *Rethinking school improvement: Research, craft and concept* (pp. 96-111). New York: Teachers College Press.

McCarthy, S. J., & Peterson, P. L. (1989, March). *Teacher roles: Weaving new patterns in classroom practice and school organization.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Education Research Association, San Francisco.

Murphy, J. (1990). Helping teachers prepare to work in restructured schools. *Journal of teachers education, 41*(4), 50-56.

Whitford, B.L., Schlecty, P.C., & Shelor, L.G. (1987). Sustaining action research through collaboration: Inquiries for intervention. Peabody journal of education, 64(3), 151-69.

Program Choice: Elementary Education Field Experience

You had a choice of taking the field-based program or the traditional student teaching. Reflect upon the reasons which guided your decision.

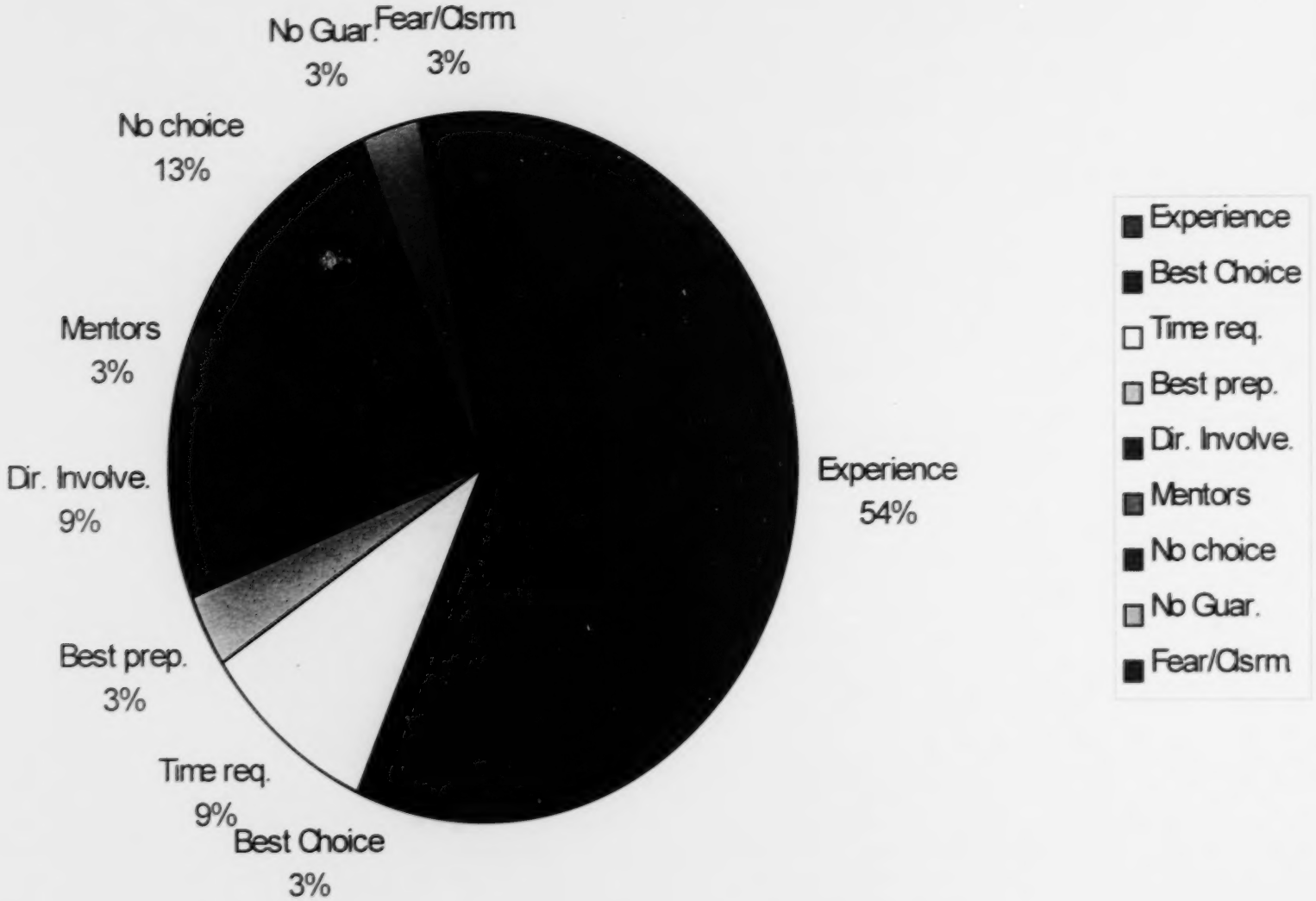
1. What was the primary reason for choosing the traditional program or the field-based program?

2. What other considerations were a part of your decision making?

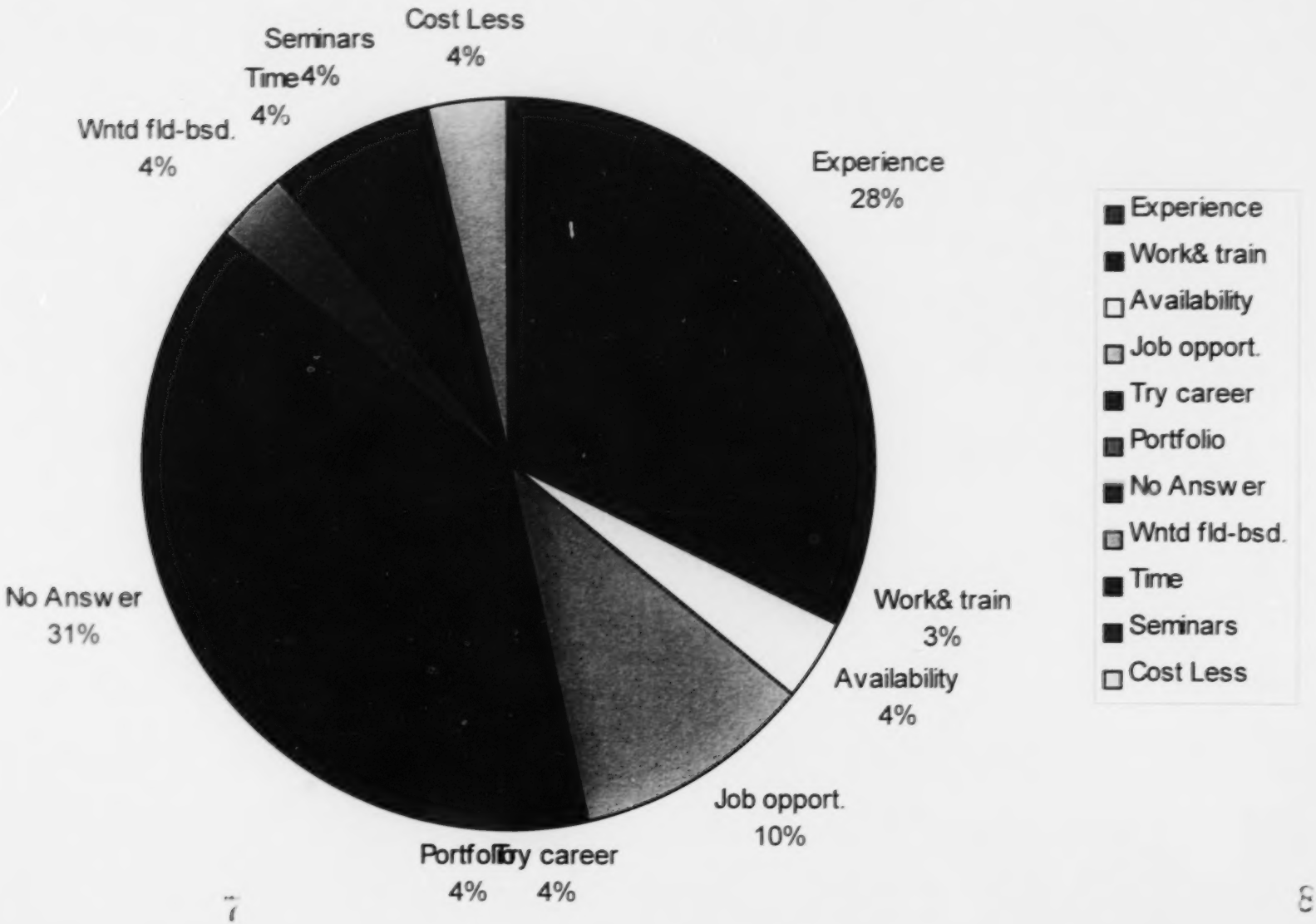
3. Now that the experience is completed, defend the wisdom of your choice.

4. Suppose your close personal friend at another institution had a choice between a traditional or field-based program. What advice would you give your friend?

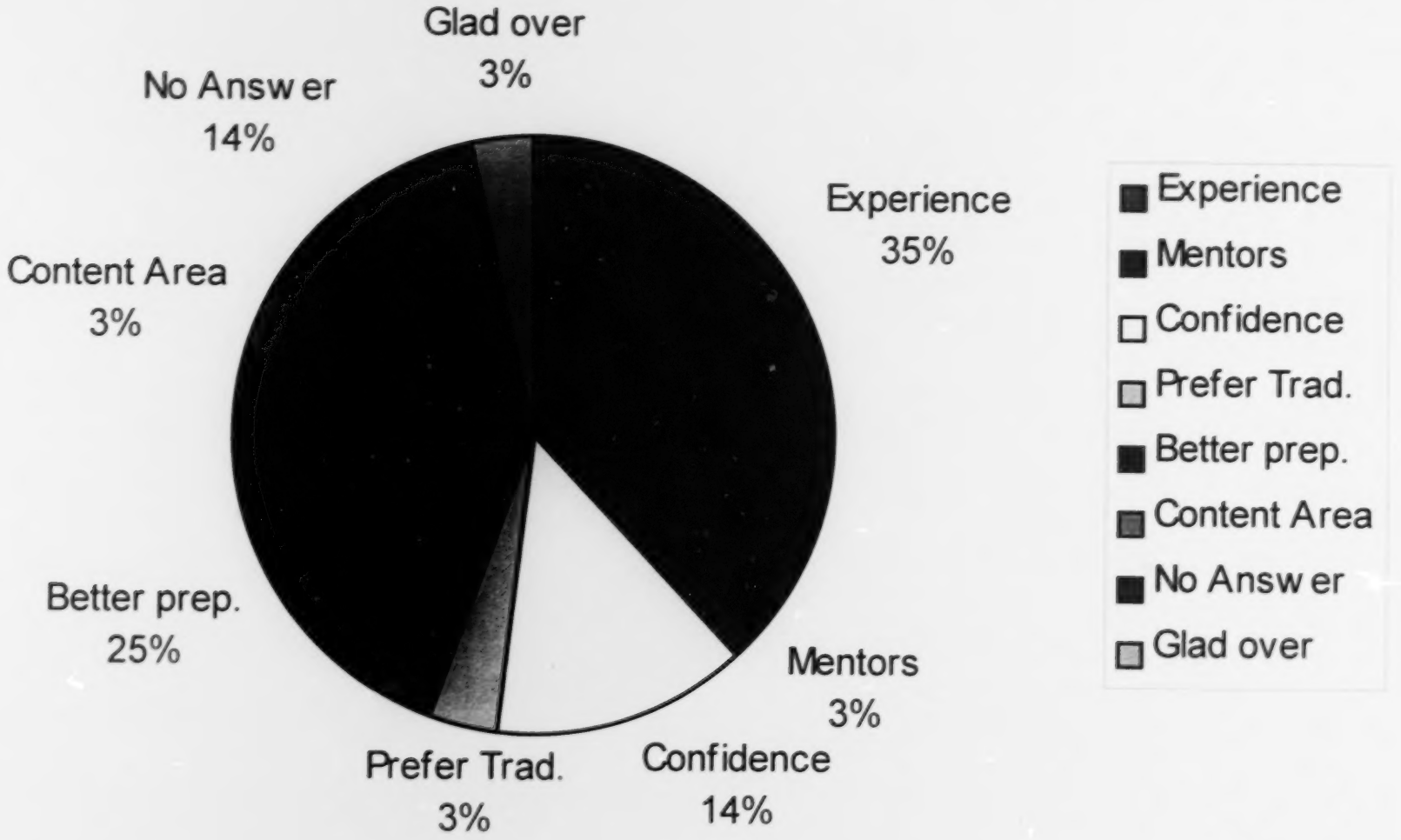
PRIMARY REASON FOR CHOOSING FIELD-BASED PROGRAM



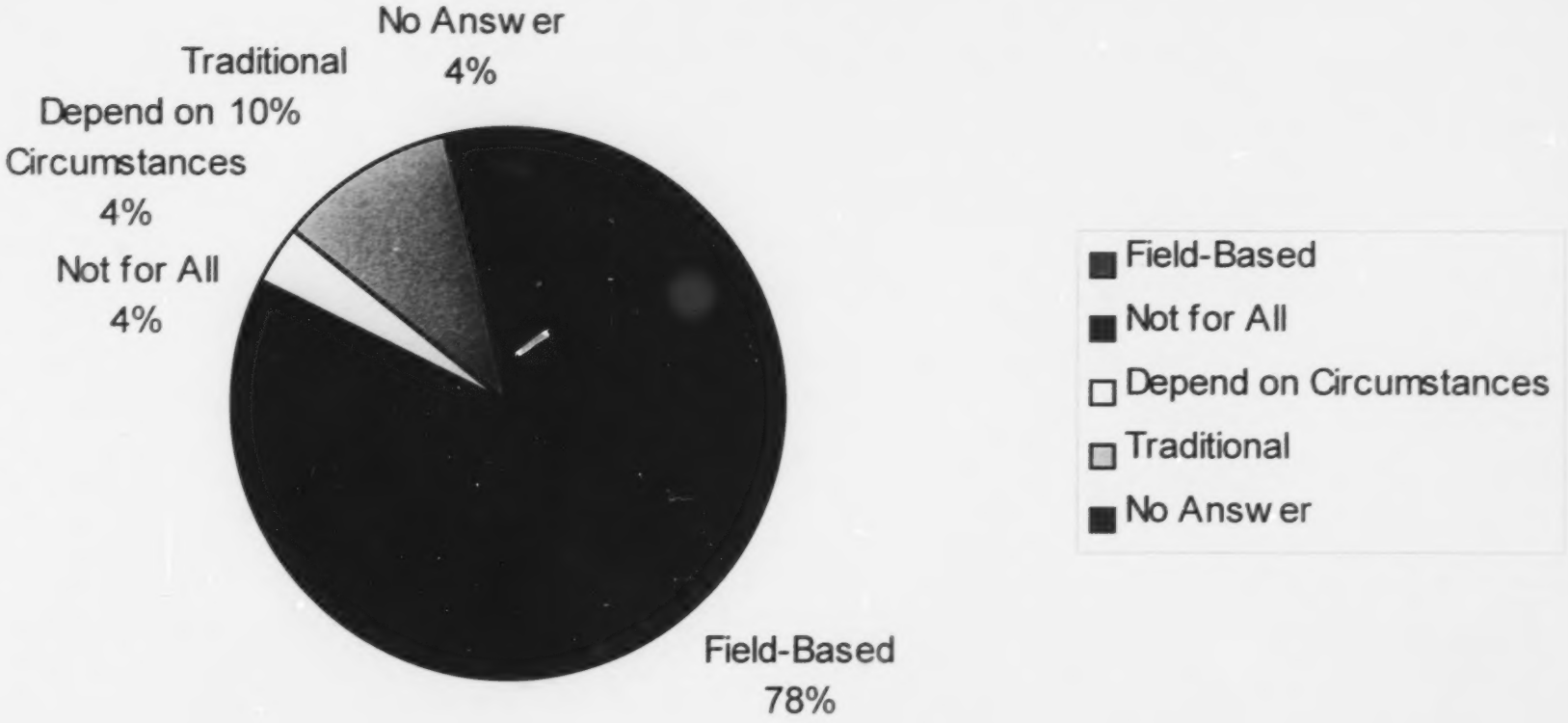
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHOOSING FIELD-BASED PROGRAM



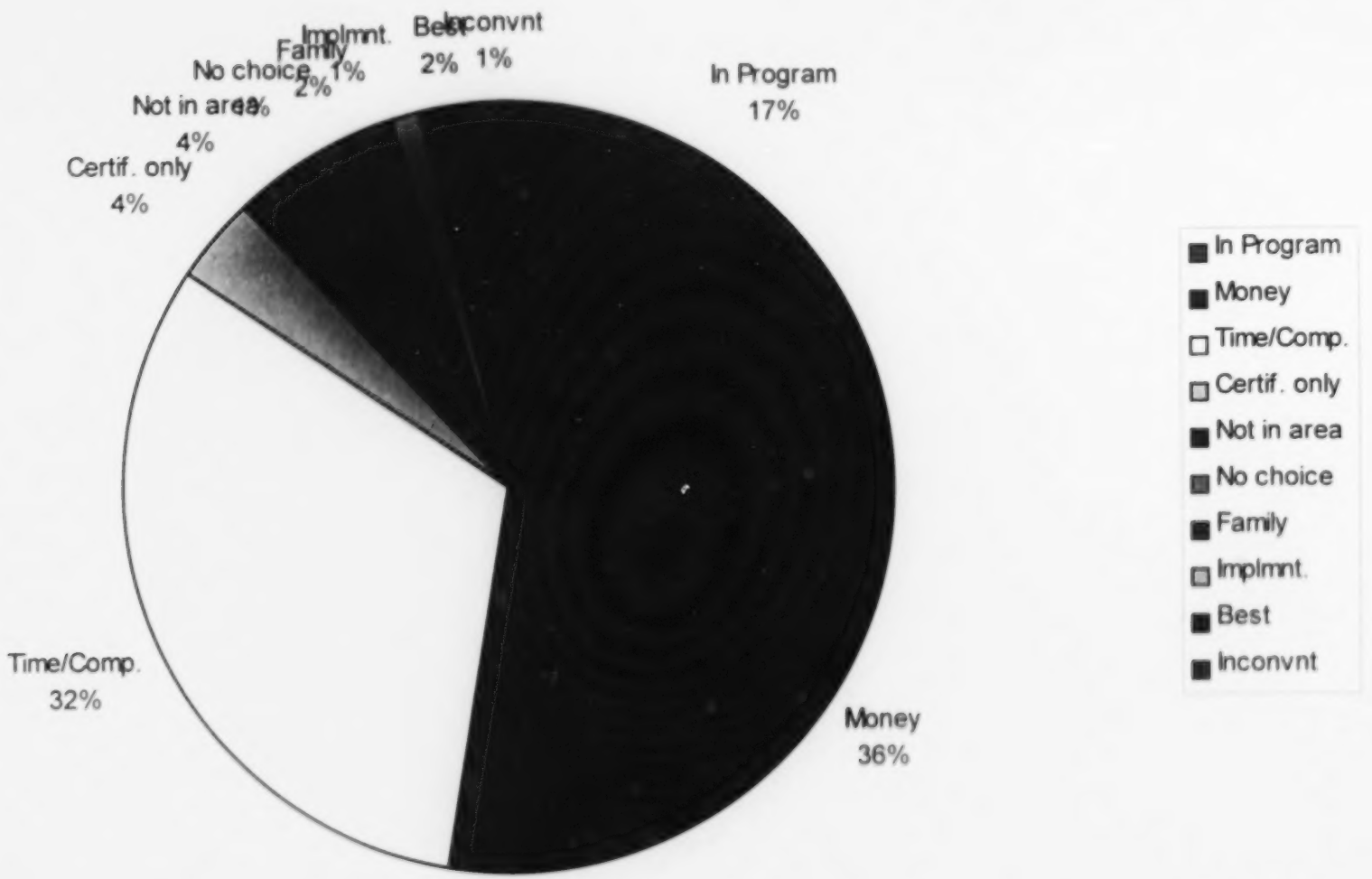
DEFEND CHOICE OF FIELD-BASED PROGAM



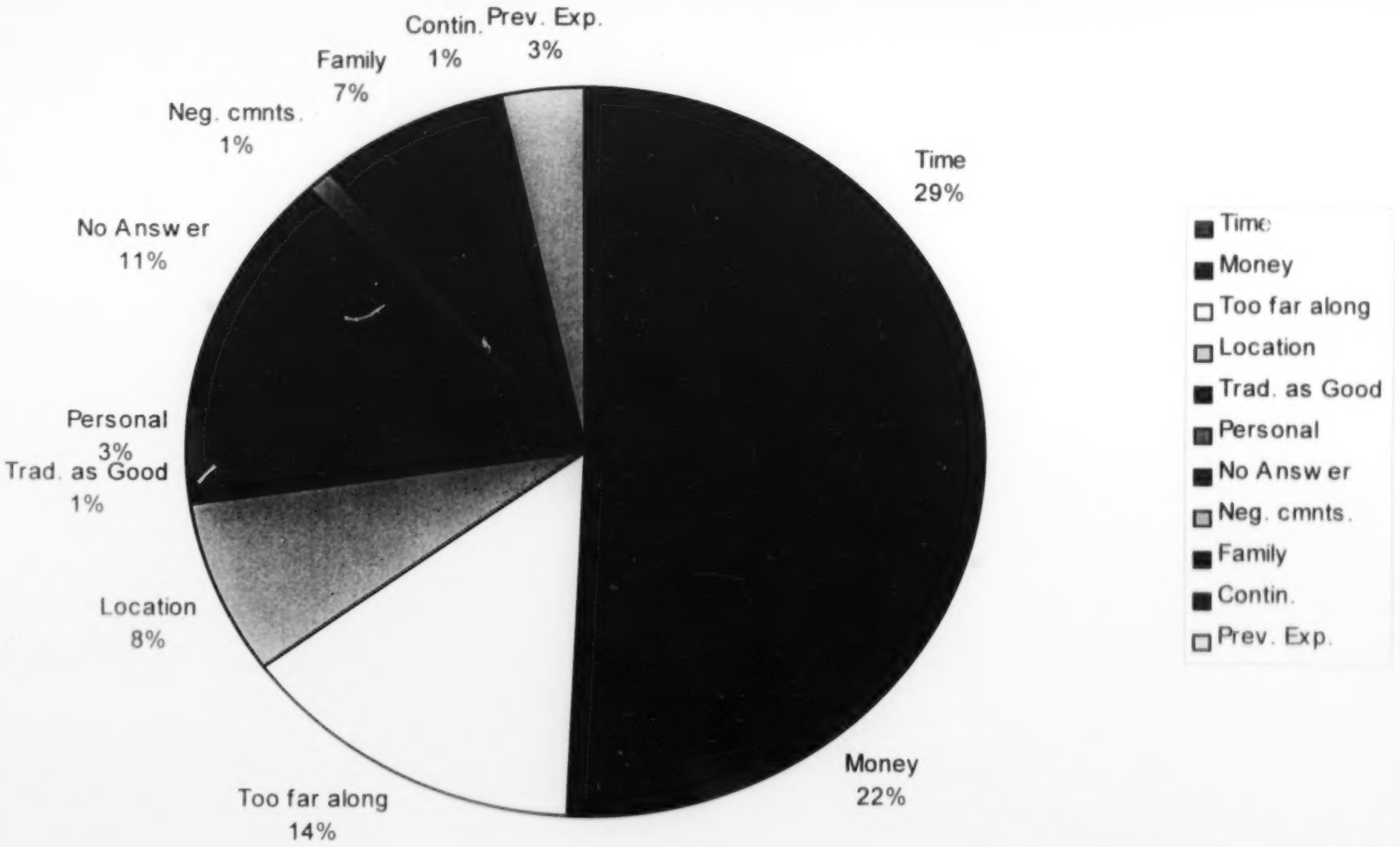
ADVISE FRIEND ON CHOICE OF PROGRAM--FIELD-BASED



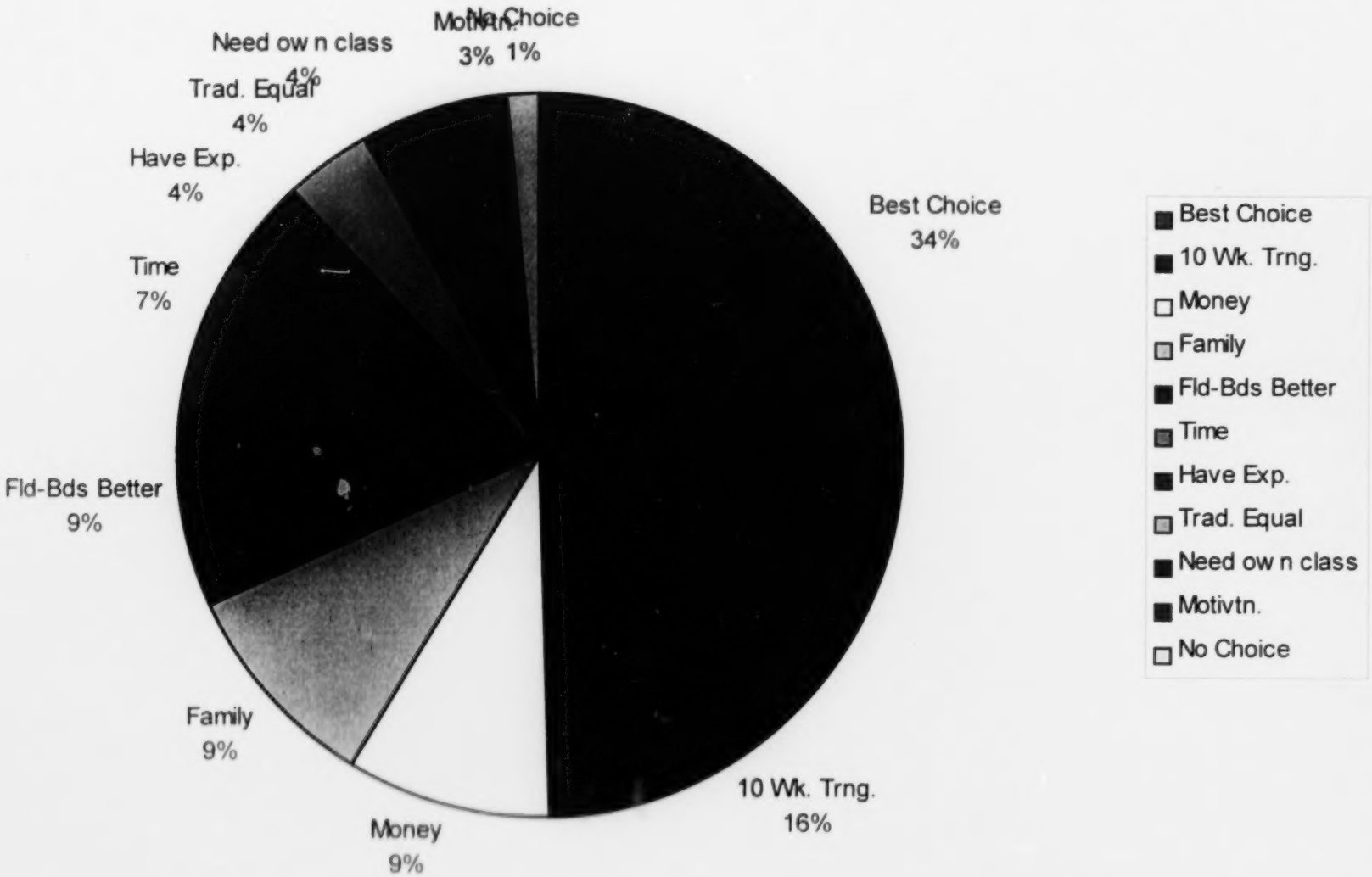
PRIMARY REASON FOR CHOOSING TRADITIONAL PROGRAM



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHOOSING TRADITIONAL PROGRAM



DEFEND CHOICE OF TRADITIONAL PROGRAM



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ADVISE FRIEND MAKING CHOICE TRADITIONAL